P. Terentius (P.) Afer 10

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

TERENCE.

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

"Tu quoque, qui ſolus lecto ſermone, Terenti,
"Converſum expreſſumque Latinâ voce Menandrum,
"In medio populi ſedatis vocibus effers;
"Quicquid come loquens, ac omnia dulcia dicens."

CICERO IN LIMONE.

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PREFACE.

IT is generally expected in writing Biography, as in Travels, inſtead of copying the relations of thoſe who have handled the ſubject before us, we ſhould produce a ſeries of our own obſervations, ſuch as an attentive ſurvey of the facts and places ſuggeſted to our own minds.

Such is generally expected from Biographers: but the *Little Book*, now exhibited to public inſpection, has no claim to originality. The *Life of Terence* has frequently been treated on: to every edition, whether Latin or Engliſh, ſome account of his Life and Writings is prefixed. But in Schools, the young Diſciple totally neglects the former, as giving him *too much trouble* to peruſe: if the latter is put into his hands, he is

too

too ready to take an improper advantage of the Tranſlation; and, without conſulting his dictionary, which will give him certain information, and thus ſecure him from miſtake, he contents himſelf with a doubtful gueſs at the ſenſe or meaning of every word which occurs: it is true, he obtains the meaning of the Author, but does he learn the idiom and phraſeology of the language? —Indolence, ſloth, and idleneſs, are conſequently the reſult of Tranſlations.

From theſe two cauſes we diſcover, that little regard or attention is paid to the Life of Terence, by young diſciples; whereas every ſchool-boy, by being acquainted with the Hiſtory of the Author, whom he is about to ſtudy, muſt feel himſelf more intereſted in the peruſal of his Writings.

If my pains, therefore, ſhould have the effect, which I propoſe, of raiſing a greater attention to the Name and Writings of Terence, and making them better underſtood, and more familiar to our youth, I cannot fail of gaining my purpoſe.

AR-

ARGUMENT.

THE utility of Biography.—The object of the present Treatise.—The Origin of Comedy.—The Ancient, Middle, and New explained.—The Birth of Terence.—His Parentage.—Sold as a Slave to Terentius Lucanus.—Is released from Slavery.—Patronized by Terentius.—Becomes acquainted with Scipio Africanus, and Caius Lælius.—Composes his Andria—Hecyra—Heautontimorumenos—Phormio—Eunuchus.—Scipio and Lælius accused of assisting Terence in his Compositions.—His Death—Person.—Style of Writing—Compared with Plautus.—Various Remarks on his Comedies; with an Explanation of their Titles.

THE LIFE

OF

TERENCE.

No ſpecies of Writing is more inſtructive to the general bulk of Readers, than Biography; it affords them the opportunity of ſeeing the diſpoſitions, virtues, and failings of eminent Men fully diſplayed: it enchains the heart, by an irreſiſtible intereſt, and diffuſes inſtruction to every diverſity of condition.

The object of the preſent Treatiſe is intended to make the Young Claſſic acquainted with the

Life, Manners, and Character of Terence, before he attempts to peruſe his celebrated Comedies. It may, however, firſt be neceſſary to give him a ſhort Hiſtory of the Progreſs of Comedy.

Comedy is generally ſuppoſed to have taken its origin from the diverſions peculiar to the feſtivals or orgies of Bacchus, and from the ruſtic repreſentations of Theſpis upon a cart. Critics diſtinguiſh three ſtages of Comedy among the Greeks, which they call the *Ancient*, the *Middle*, and the *New*.

The ſtrength of the *Ancient Comedy* conſiſted in vilifying and bantering the moſt illuſtrious Perſonages of the State,* the moſt able Generals, and the beſt Magiſtrates. Such was the nature

* For a more particular account of the Three Stages of Comedy, I refer my Readers to *Blair's Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 535, from whence this is extracted.

of

of the Plays of Ariſtophanes,* Eupolis, and Cartinus.

Soon after the days of Ariſtophanes, the liberty of defaming public characters on the ſtage, by name, being found of a dangerous tendency to the public peace, was prohibited by law: at the ſame time the Chorus likewiſe was baniſhed from the Comic Theatre, as an inſtrument of too much licence and abuſe. This was the origin of the *Middle Comedy*.† But the law was eaſily evaded, and fictitious names employed, and living perſons deſcribed in ſuch a manner as to be ſufficiently known.

But that wild licentious government was no ſooner checked, than men of genius and capa-

* Eleven of his Plays are ſtill remaining.

† No Specimens of the Middle Comedy are now extant.

city began to diſtinguiſh themſelves, and appear eminent: a ſecretion was made;—Manners were formed; Characters attended to, and reſpected. From thence may we draw the origin of *New Comedy*. Perſonal ridicule was baniſhed, and Menander, and his contemporaries, Diphilus and Philemon, reformed the public taſte, and ſet the model of correct, elegant, and moral Comedy.

The Comic pieces of Menander are irrecoverably loſt; and the only remains which we now have of the *New Comedy*, are the Plays of Plautus and Terence: both formed their ſtyle from the Greek Writers.

Having thus explained the Riſe and Progreſs of Comedy, I ſhall now proceed to give ſome Account of the Life and Writings of PUBLIUS TERENTIUS AFER.

To

To the celebrated city of Carthage, the ſubject of this Memoir is indebted for his birth, in the year of Rome 559, ſeven years after the ſecond Punic war, and 192 before Chriſt. Some Authors ſuppoſe, that he was made captive in his infancy by the Numidians and Getulians, and ſent immediately to Rome, but Feneſtella* and Ælius Donatus,† both refute this erroneous ſuppoſition. "Quidam (ſays Donatus, in his *Life of Terence)* captum eſſe exiſtimant: quod fieri nullo modo potuiſſe Feneſtella docet: quum inter finem ſecundi belli Punici, et initium tertii natus ſit et mortuus; nec ſi a Numidis aut Getulis captus ſit, ad ducem Romanum pervenire potuiſſet; nullo commercio inter Italicos et Afros niſi poſt deletam Carthaginem, caepto." It is evident, however, that his parentage was

* A Roman Hiſtorian, in the age of Auguſtus.

† A celebrated Grammarian who flouriſhed, A. D. 353.

very mean, as his true name is buried in oblivion, and he borrowed his preſent from his patron Terentius Lucanus, the Roman Senator, to whom our Comic Writer was ſold in his infancy as a ſlave. His Patron ſoon perceived his genius and abilities, and not only liberally educated him, but very early releaſed him from ſlavery.

His extraordinary abilities, and accurate writings, ſoon recommended him to the moſt illuſtrious Perſonages of Rome, but more particularly to Scipio Africanus, and Caius Lælius. With theſe two incomparable friends, he lived with the greateſt familiarity.

The ſtudy and obſervation of men and manners, ſeem early to have been his chief employment, as his own writings ſufficiently evince; though he by no means neglected to gain a thorough knowledge of the Greek language, from whence

whence he borrowed the matter of his Comedies.

Six of his Plays are ſtill extant. Having finiſhed his firſt Comedy, he preſented it to the Ædiles, who commanded him to recite it before Cæcilius, as the moſt approved judge. The low appearance of Terence, and the meanneſs of his habit, did not prepoſſeſs Cæcilius in his favour, who was then at ſupper; he was treated by the whole company with the greateſt contempt, and ordered to read his Comedy (ſuppoſed to be the Andria) at a diſtance from the table; but having recited a few verſes, Cæcilius immediately invited him to partake of the ſupper, to the great ſatisfaction of the whole company. This Play he compoſed in the twenty-eighth* year of his age; and the greateſt part of it is taken from Menander.

* Some Authors ſuppoſe, "in the twenty-fifth."

2d. The year following he compoſed his *Hecyra*, or *Mother-in-Law;* this he chiefly tranſlated from Apollodorus, the Greek Comic Poet. The firſt repreſentation of this play proved unſucceſsful, and is the only one, whoſe plot is perfectly ſingle.

3d. Two years after, he compoſed his *Heautontimorumenos*, or *Self-Tormentor;* the ſubject of this is borrowed from Menander.

4th. Two years after, his *Phormio* appeared; for this he is much indebted to Apollodorus' *Epidicazomenos*.

5th. In the ſame year he compoſed his celebrated *Eunuchus*, of which he borrowed a great part from Menander. This Play was acted twice in one day: for which Terence received eight thou-

thouſand ſeſterces: a reward, which no Comedy had ever before deſerved.

6th. In the thirty-fourth year of his age, his laſt Comedy, called the *Adelphi*, or *Brothers*, was equally admired; for this he is indebted to Menander. Varro, indeed, prefers the beginning of the Adelphi, to the beginning of Menander.

Scipio and Lælius, on account of their intimacy with our Author, are generally ſuſpected of having aſſiſted him in the compoſition of his Comedies. Terence, however, endeavours to defend himſelf from this imputation, in the Prologue* of the Adelphi.

The place and manner of his death are very

* Nam quod iſti dicunt malevoli, homines nobiles
Hunc adjutare, &c.

un-

uncertain. However, it is accurately aſcertained, that, either to avoid the ſcandal and malice of his enemies, or to inſtruct himſelf more thoroughly in the Cuſtoms and Manners of the Grecians, he left Rome in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and never afterwards returned. Some authors imagine, that having tranſlated one hundred and eight Plays of Menander, in his return from Greece to Rome, he periſhed in the ſea. Others relate, that, overwhelmed with grief, on account of his Plays, which were loſt in their way to Rome, he died at Stymphalus,* or Leucadia. Volcatius, in ſpeaking of the death of Terence, ſays:

"Sed ut Afer ſex populo dedit Comœdias,
"Iter hinc in Aſiam fecit. Navim cum ſemel
"Conſcendit, viſus nunquam eſt, ſic vita vacat."

In reſpect to his perſon, he was of a middle

* A town in Arcadia.

ſtature,

ſtature, and of a dark complexion.* He left but one daughter, who after his death married to a Roman Knight.

Though the talents of Terence were employed rather in tranſlating, than in ſearch of originality, yet his ſtyle is a model of the pureſt Latinity. The conſtruction of his ſentences are eaſy and agreeable, carrying a character of ſmoothneſs, more than of the *Vis-Comica;* whilſt a conſtant vein of good ſenſe, morality, and uſeful inſtruction, is conveyed in a ſtyle pure, natural, and unaffected. In reſpect to that pictureſque ſimplicity, for which he is ſo juſtly admired, I ſhall here take the liberty of producing the following paſſage, though ſo often quoted, as the moſt beautiful inſtance of ſimplicity:

——— " Funus interim
" Procedit; ſequimur; ad ſepulchrum venimus;

* Fuiſſe dicitur mediocri ſtatura, gracili corpore, colore fuſco.—*Ælius Donatus.*

" In

" In ignem impoſita eſt; fletur; interea hæc ſoror
" Quam dixi, ad flammam acceſſit imprudentius
" Satis cum periculo. Ibi tum exanimatus Pamphilus,
" Bene diſſimulatum amorem, & celatum indicat;
" Occurrit præceps, mulierem ab igne retrahit,
" Mea Glycerium, inquit quid agis? Cur te is perditum?
" Tum illa, ut conſuetum facile amorem cerneres,
" Rejecit ſe in eum, flens quam familiariter."

Andria, act 1. *ſc.* 1.

" Meanwhile the funeral proceeds; we follow;
" Come to the ſepulchre: the body's placed
" Upon the pile; lamented; whereupon
" This ſiſter, I was ſpeaking of, all wild,
" Ran to the flames with peril of her life.
" There! there! the frighted Pamphilus betrays
" His well-diſſembled and long-hidden love;
" Runs up and takes her round the waiſt and cries,
" O my Glycerium! what is it you do?
" Why, why, endeavour to deſtroy yourſelf?
" Then ſhe in ſuch a manner, that you thence
" Might eaſily perceive their long, long love,
" Threw herſelf back into his arms, and wept,
" Oh! how familiarly!——COLMAN.

Many

Many inſtances of the ſame artleſs and unlaboured ſtyle might be produced; but the nature of this Treatiſe will not allow it.* In ſhort, we may, with juſtice, apply to our Poet the beautiful line of Homer:

τῳ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδή †

I ſhall now finiſh this ſhort Treatiſe, with a compariſon of the Writings of Plautus and Terence, as drawn by the maſterly pen of Blair: ‡

"The only remains which we now have of "the New Comedy, among the Ancients, are "the Plays of Plautus and Terence, both of

* Perſuaſit homini: factum eſt: ventum eſt: vincimur duxit.—*Phormio, act* 1. *ſc.* 2.

† Words, ſweet as honey, from his lips diſtill'd.

POPE, b. i. p. 332.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 537.

"whom

" whom were formed upon the Greek Writers.
" Plautus is diſtinguiſhed for very expreſſive lan-
" guage, and a great degree of the *Vis-Comica.*
" As he wrote in an early period, he bears ſeve-
" ral marks of the rudeneſs of the Dramatic Art
" among the Romans in his time. He opens his
" Plays with Prologues, which ſometimes preoc-
" cupy the ſubject of the whole piece. The re-
" preſentation too, and the action of the Comedy,
" are ſometimes confounded; the Actor depart-
" ing from his character, and addreſſing the au-
" dience. There is too much low wit, and ſcur-
" rility in Plautus; too much of quaint conceit,
" and play upon words. But withal he diſplays
" more variety, and more force than Terence.
" His characters are always ſtrongly marked,
" though ſometimes coarſely. His Amphytrion
" has been copied, both by Moliere, and by Dry-
" den; and his Miſer alſo (in the Aulularia) is
" the foundation of a capital Play of Moliere's,
" which

"which has been once and again imitated on the "Engliſh Stage. Than Terence nothing can be "more delicate, more poliſhed, and elegant. His "ſtyle is a model of the pureſt and moſt graceful "Latinity. His dialogue is always decent and "correct; and he poſſeſſes, beyond moſt Writers, "the art of relating with that beautiful pictu-"reſque ſimplicity, which never fails to pleaſe. "His morality is, in general, unexceptionable. "The ſituations which he introduces, are often "tender and intereſting; and many of his ſenti-"ments touch the heart. Hence, he may be "conſidered as the founder of that ſerious Co-"medy, which has of late years been revived, and "of which I ſhall have occaſion afterwards to "ſpeak. If he fails in any thing, it is in ſpright-"lineſs* and ſtrength. Both in his characters, "and

* I before obſerved, that the *Self-Tormentor* is partly tranſlated from Menander. It is ſingular, that ſcarcely one paſſage

" and in his plots, there is too much ſameneſs
" and uniformity throughout all his Plays; he
" copied Menander, and is ſaid not to have
" equalled him.* In order to form a perfect Co-
" mic Author, an union would be requiſite of the
" ſpirit

paſſage in this Comedy could raiſe a laugh, and yet it was univerſally applauded. There cannot be a greater argument produced of the general good underſtanding and taſte of the Audience, in giving their conſent to a moral ſentiment, in preference to buffoonery. Indeed, in the very firſt ſcene, when Menedemus accuſes Chremes of impertinence for interpoſing in his own affairs, he replies:

" Homo ſum: humani nihil a me alienum puto."

This ſentence was received with univerſal applauſe.

* Julius Cæſar has given us his opinion of Terence, in the following lines, which are preſerved in the *Life of Terence*, aſcribed to Suetonius, though prefixed to moſt editions of our Author, with the name of Donatus:

" Tu quoque, tu in ſummis, ô dimidiate Menander
" Poneris, et merito, puri ſermonis amator;
" Lenibus

" ſpirit and fire of Plautus, with the grace and " correctneſs of Terence."

" Lenibus atque utinam ſcriptis adjuncta foret vis
" Comica, ut aequato virtus polleret honore
" Cum Græcis, neque in hac deſpectus parte jaceres;
" Unum hoc maceror, et doleo tibi deeſſe, Terenti."

REMARKS

ON THE

COMEDIES OF TERENCE.

THE time of the repreſentation of TERENCE's COMEDIES, is prefixed to moſt editions of that Poet: but, for the better underſtanding of the titles, the Young Claſſic muſt remember, that at Rome, Plays were always acted on particular and ſolemn occaſions, public feaſts, or the funerals of great men: thus the *Andrian*,—the *Eunuch*,—

the *Self-Tormentor*,—the *Mother-in-Law*, were acted at the Megaleſian Games.*

The *Brothers*, at the Funeral Games of Lælius Æmilius Paulus.

Phormio, at the Roman Sports.

The Curule Ædiles are likewiſe inſerted in the title: to them belonged the care and management of exhibiting and directing every thing. Thus, for inſtance: we find Terence, before the repreſentation of the *Andrian*, offered it to the Ædiles for their approbation, who ordered him to read it to Cæcilius,† It was alſo the office of theſe

* Games inſtituted in honour of Cybele, by the Phrygians, and introduced at Rome in the ſecond Punic War, when the ſtatue of the Goddeſs was brought from Peſſinus, a town of Phrygia.

† "Cæcilius died two years before the repreſentation of "the

theſe Magiſtrates of Rome to inſpect all public buildings, baths, aqueducts, &c. and to regulate the market, as well as preſide at all ſolemn games, and public entertainments.

We likewiſe find, that the principal Actors, (*i. e.* the Managers of the Company or Companies of Actors concerned in the repreſentation*) are mentioned in the ſeveral titles to our Author's pieces. "We are told (ſays Colman) by "the Greek Scholiaſts, that theſe titles were al-"ways prefixt to pieces acted by the authority "of the Magiſtrate. One of them ſtands before "each of the Comedies of Terence; but it is "plain from Suetonius, as Le Fevre has ob-

"the *Andrian*. It is therefore a very plauſible, as well as "an ingenious, correction of Voſſius, to read Acilius, the "name of one of the Ædiles, the year of the exhibition of "that Play."——COLMAN.

* COLMAN.

"ſerved, that they have deſcended to our times "defective and imperfect."

Theſe Comedies, according to the titles, were all accompanied with Muſick: this is an evincing proof, that the Ancient Drama approached nearer to the genius of our Opera, than Tragedy or Comedy. No part of the hiſtory of the Ancient drama has embarraſſed commentators more than the Muſick. Plays were all acted *tibiis** *paribus*, or *imparibus*—*dextris*, or *ſiniſtris*, *i. e.* to Flutes equal or unequal—right or left handed. According to Donatus† the right handed or Lydian Flutes were proper accompaniments to Comedies of a ſerious caſt: the left-handed, or Sarranian Flutes, to thoſe of a humorous and lighter. But when the play was ſaid to be acted to both

* *Tibia*, a flute, takes its name from being anciently made of the leg of ſome animal, as a horſe, a dog, &c.

† Quoted by COLMAN.

Right

Right and Left handed, it denoted it to be ſerio-comick.

The Plays were all acted in the day time; and the Theatres, ſome of them ſo large, that the one built by Pompey is ſaid to have contained an audience of eighty thouſand people.

It is highly requiſite for the young Student to be informed, that the Comedies of Terence were evidently not written without regard to meaſure: but, like all other Comic Poets, Terence has indulged himſelf in many licences; indeed, the particular character* of the meaſure uſed by thoſe Poets is its familiarity, and near approach to common converſation, as Horace ſays,

——— "niſi quod pede certo
"Differt ſermoni, ſermo merus."

"And bate the numbers, is but mere diſcourſe."
FRANCIS.

* COLMAN in his Preface.

As there is not one Play, without ſome illuſion to the Coins then in circulation, I have deemed it proper, in this place, to inſert Cooke's Table of Attick Money, quoted by Colman, in the Preface of his Tranſlation of Terence.

A Table of Sums in Attic Money, with their Proportions to Engliſh Money.

OBOLI.

	£.	s.	d.	q.
1	00	00	01	$1\frac{1}{6}$
2	00	00	02	$2\frac{1}{3}$
3	00	00	03	$3\frac{3}{6}$
4	00	00	05	$0\frac{2}{3}$
5	00	00	06	$1\frac{5}{6}$
6 equal to a *Drachmæ*	00	00	07	3

DRACHMÆ.

1	00	00	07	3
10	00	06	05	2
100 equal to a *Minæ*	03	04	07	0

MINÆ.

MINÆ.

	£.	s.	d.	q.
1 ———	03	04	07	0
10 ———	32	05	10	0
20 ———	64	11	08	0
60 equal to a *Talent*	193	15	00	0

TALENTA.

1 ———	193	15	00	0
5 ———	968	15	00	0
10 ———	1937	10	00	0
15 ———	2906	05	00	0
20 ———	3875	00	00	0
100 ———	19375	00	00	0

Terence mentions the *Half-minæ*, in his *Adelphi*, which was a ſingle Coin, in proportion to 01 — 12 — 03 — 2.

The *Obolus* was braſs, the reſt were ſilver.

THE

THE ANDRIAN.

There is much controverſy among the Criticks, whether the *Andrian* was the firſt Play, which Terence produced, or only the firſt of thoſe which have come down to our times. Donatus poſitively aſſerts it to be our Author's firſt production, and adds, that the favourable reception it met with encouraged him to go on in writing for the ſtage. Madam Dacier is of a contrary opinion; and thinks that the introductory lines of the Prologue make it evident, that Terence had written before. For my part, I am rather inclined to the opinion of Donatus. The concluding lines of the Prologue ſpeak the language of an Author, new in the Drama, much ſtronger than thoſe in the beginning, denote his having written before. It may be remembered alſo, that Terence was no more than twenty-ſeven years

of

of age, at the time of the firſt repreſentation of this Comedy.—COLMAN.

Both the Engliſh and French Theatres have borrowed the Fable of this Play. Sir Richard Steele has raiſed, on that foundation, his Comedy of the Conſcious Lovers; and Baron has adopted even the Title.—COLMAN.

Though Sir Richard Steele falls very ſhort of Terence, yet it will be a great ſource, both of amuſement and advantage, to the young Claſſic, to trace the difference of their characters and plot.

THE EUNUCH.

This ſeems to have been the moſt popular of all the Comedies of Terence. For this the Poet re-

received eight thouſand ſeſterces, which is about equal to two hundred crowns, eſteemed, in thoſe days, a conſiderable ſum.

Baif, a Poet, who lived under Charles IX. made a tranſlation of the *Eunuch* into French verſe. There is likewiſe extant, in the works of the celebrated Fontaine, a Comedy, entitled, *L'Eunuque*, founded on Terence.—COLMAN.

THE SELF-TORMENTOR.

The Latin title of this Play, *Heautontimorumenos*, is of Greek derivation, compounded of εαυτον τιμωρεμενος, literally ſignifying a *Self-Tormentor*.

There is, perhaps, no Play of Terence, wherein the Author has pointed out the place and time of

of action with more exactneſs than in the preſent; and yet, the ſettling thoſe points has occaſioned a moſt furious controverſy between two learned Frenchmen, Kedelin and Menage.—COLMAN.

For a longer account, ſee his Note. Act 1. *ſc.* 1.

THE BROTHERS.

It has been ſaid, that *L'Ecole des Maris* [*The School for Huſbands*] was a copy of the *Brothers* of Terence: if ſo, Moliere deſerves more praiſe for having brought the taſte of ancient Rome into France, than reproach for having ſtolen his piece. But the *Brothers* furniſhed nothing more than the bare idea of the *Ecole des Maris*.—COLMAN.

Baron, the Author of the *Andrianne*, has alſo written a Comedy, called *L'Ecole des Peres* [*The*

[*The School for Fathers*] built on this Play of Terence.—COLMAN.

In our own language, the *Squire of Alſatia*, of Shadwell, is alſo founded on this Play: but the *Muſe of White-friars*, has but little right to the praiſes due to that of Athens and Rome. —*ibid.*

THE STEP-MOTHER.

Terence had recourſe to the expedient of *double plots:* and this, I ſuppoſe, is what gained him the reputation of the moſt *artificial* writer for the ſtage. The *Step-Mother* is the only one of his Comedies, of the true ancient caſt; and we know how it came off in the repreſentation. That ill ſucceſs, and the ſimplicity of its conduct, have continued to draw upon it the ſame unfavourable treatment from the Criticks, to this day,

day, who conſtantly ſpeak of it, as much inferior to the reſt; whereas, for the genuine beauty of dramatick deſign, and the obſervance, after the ancient Greek manner, of the nice dependency and coherence of the *fable*, throughout, it is, indiſputably, to every reader of true taſte, the moſt maſterly and exquiſite of the whole collection.—HURD's *Notes on the Epiſtle to Auguſtus.*

PHORMIO.

Moliere has given us a contemptible traveſty of this excellent Comedy, in his miſerable farce of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*: "The Cheats of "Scapin."—COLMAN's *laſt Note to the Phormio.*

FINIS.

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